

Additional Information

Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later), a good distant shot is better than none and will be of some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi.

For more information about ATBI, please contact David Hill, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email david.r.hill@tn.gov. Phone 615-253-2455.

Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee's natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.

RED CLAY STATE HISTORIC PARK

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Cleveland, TN 37311-8386

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www.tn.gov/environment/parks/RedClay/

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS DIVISION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)

Dragonflies and Damselflies of Red Clay State Historic Park and Bradley County



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful Red Clay State Park! Of the approximate 155 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee, 31 have been documented in this park and Bradley County.

Above is a picture of a Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*), male. A common "percher", widow skimmers are found near lakes, ponds and slow sections of streams. Both males and females have the solid black wing stripes next to the body. You can remember this one by: "the Widow wears black next to the body". The female has a dark brown abdomen with a bright yellow stripe down the sides.

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Dragonfly and Damselfly Checklist of Red Clay State Historic Park and Bradley County

Damselflies (Zygoptera)

Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)

- ☐ Appalachian Jewelwing
- ☐ Sparkling Jewlwing
- * ☐ Ebony Jewelwing
- ☐ Smoky Rubyspot

Spreadwings (Lestidae)

- * ☐ Swamp Spreadwing

Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)

- * ☐ Variable Dancer
- ☐ Powdered Dancer
- ☐ Blue-tipped Dancer
- ☐ Stream Bluet
- * ☐ Citrine Forktail
- * ☐ Fragile Forktail

Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

Dragonflies Darners (Aeshnidae)

- * ☐ Common Green Darner

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

- ☐ Black-shouldered Spinyleg
- ☐ Splendid Clubtail
- ☐ Cobra Clubtail
- ☐ Dragonhunter
- ☐ Edmund's Snaketail
- ☐ Common Sanddragon

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

- * ☐ Common (Eastern) Pondhawk
- * ☐ Blue Corporal
- * ☐ Spangled Skimmer
- * ☐ Slaty Skimmer
- * ☐ Widow Skimmer
- * ☐ Twelve-spotted Skimmer
- * ☐ Painted Skimmer
- ☐ Great Blue Skimmer
- * ☐ Blue Dasher
- * ☐ Eastern Amberwing
- * ☐ Common Whitetail
- * ☐ Autumn Meadowhawk
- * ☐ Black Saddlebags

*** Documented in the Park**

Habitat

Red Clay State Historic Park lies on the southern edge of Bradley County just above the Georgia State line. A small park with great historic value, it still has places to see dragonflies. The site contains a natural landmark, the Blue Hole Spring which arises from beneath a limestone ledge to form a deep pool that flows into Mill Creek. The spring was used by the Cherokee for their water supply during council meetings. Mill Creek has beavers which have created a pond and wetlands.

Good spots

*At the spring and along the creek.

*Along the edge of the pond and in wetland vegetation.

*Open areas/fields and along the edges of these open areas / fields.

Notes: _____
